

ABOUT GROWTH

WASHINGTON STATE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Contents

Solutions that cross boundaries	2
Event to recognize 10 years of GMA work	2
Regional cooperation fosters solutions	3
Governor creates Office of Community Development	3
Council calls for VISION 2020 award nominations	3
Cooperative efforts and coordination important in providing affordable housing	4
Local governments beginning to make revenue sharing agreements	5
Coordinated planning key to successful annexation	6
Skagit County subarea plan for Bayview Ridge Urban Growth Area: a coordinated regional approach	7
County, cities cooperate on affordable housing	8
National conference to focus on urban design, safety	8

Developing a way to work together on buildable lands

By Dan Cardwell

Associate Planner, Pierce County Planning and Land Services

During the 1997 legislative session, I was asked to review the buildable lands section of SB 6094, now known as the "Buildable Lands Program" (RCW 37.70A.215).

While I didn't have a concern with the overall purpose of the legislation, my analysis highlighted the necessary cooperation from cities and towns. Three years later, the type of high-level cooperation that I envisioned has been extremely important in the progress Pierce County and its cities and towns have made in meeting the legislative requirements.

The overall purpose of the buildable lands requirement is to develop a county-wide land development monitoring and evaluation system. The goal is to determine the amount of buildable land to meet future population needs. As required by state law, the county must complete its Buildable Lands Capacity Report by September 2002. If the analysis reveals jurisdictions are not meeting their growth targets and objectives, reasonable measures, other than adjusting urban growth areas, must be identified.

Coordinating planning efforts and suggesting modifications within a large bureaucracy is difficult enough, let alone coordinating efforts between 23 cities and towns with various levels of technical and staff resources. At the outset, it was understood that for the project to be successful, cooperation and coordination was an essential component.

Pierce County identified a county project coordinator to assist cities and towns. A Buildable Lands Oversight Subcommittee, representing cities and towns, was established to provide guidance to the project coordinator. This subcommittee has proven invaluable. In the early stages, the subcommittee helped make it clear that this wasn't just another county project that needed cursory assistance from the cities and towns.

The subcommittee's early discussions pointed out the necessity for written procedures in outlining the process and format for data collection, i.e., the type to collect, who should collect it, and when. To assist the county, cities, and towns, Cogen Owens Cogen – an Oregon consulting firm with expertise in this area – was hired to road map the process from start to finish. The challenge was to develop a process that could be carried out by all jurisdictions. The resulting document, *Pierce County Buildable Lands, Procedures for Collecting and Monitoring Data*, was finalized in April 2000.

After two years of work, the county and its cities and towns have made significant progress. Key milestones include:

- Amendments to the Pierce County County-wide Planning Policies that incorporate the buildable lands project have been forwarded from the Pierce County Regional Council to the county council and each city and town for ratification.

- Funding for technical projects to enhance data collection, i.e., digital aerial photos and permit tracking systems, was committed.

- Development activity information was collected from towns and cities consistent with the Pierce County procedures for the years from the adoption of their GMA comprehensive plans through 1998. The majority of cities and towns submitted the appropriate 1999 development information by June 2000.

A preliminary buildable lands inventory for unincorporated Pierce County and 13 of the 23 cities and towns was completed. The remaining 10 cities and towns are proceeding independently using the approved procedures. In addition, the county is in the process of hiring a consultant to enhance critical area data.

The focus for the next project year will be to finalize the buildable lands inventory and the critical areas data enhancement project. Future commercial/industrial land needs will be one of the final components to be addressed for the required 2002 analysis.

ABOUT GROWTH

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Solutions that cross boundaries



By Shane Hope
Managing Director,
Growth Management Program

Once upon a time in Washington, I knew of a town that had a water system to serve its residents and those of the town next-door. The town next-door had a sewer system to serve its own residents and those of the town with the water system.

This worked in fits and starts. On one hand, the two governments had to talk to each other; on the other hand, they argued a lot. Overall, they both saved money, compared to running two sewer systems and two water systems.

In Washington today, cooperation and coordination are needed more than ever. Boundaries drawn on a map do not line up neatly with complex issues such as air and water quality, transportation, economic vitality, crime prevention, and affordable housing. What happens in one place affects another.

Yet jurisdictions often feel forced to vie with each other, instead of working together. Monies are limited. Boundaries are a "real world" dividing line for the control of resources and authority to address needs. Some governments – cities, counties, special purpose districts, tribes, and others – have stepped beyond these limitations. You will read a few of their stories in this publication.

Growth management has been a venue for discussing difficult topics that cross jurisdictional boundaries. That is one of the reasons it is controversial. The illusion that each community is an island unto itself cannot be maintained as growth occurs. Under the Growth Management Act (GMA), local governments have had to consult with each other in identifying where urban development should go and how much growth they can handle.

Before adopting comprehensive plans, they had to adopt county-wide planning policies to address regional implications for public facilities, economic development, housing, and urban growth areas. All of these are evolving issues and local governments are savvier today than they were when the GMA first went into place. From time to time, they will revisit their county-wide planning policies and consider adjustments.

Regional coordination plays out at other levels too. For example, certain federal programs recognize transportation as a regional issue. To get "Tea-21" money, local governments must be part of a regional transportation planning organization, which adopts a regional plan for prioritizing needs and projects. This dovetails with the growth management requirement for regional transportation planning organizations to certify transportation elements in local comprehensive plans.

But state government's role in regional coordination is less clear. For example, how does the state support regional priorities for public facilities? Can the state do more to encourage "fair-share" regional approaches to social service needs and low-income housing? Should state funding programs more specifically reward communities that have banded together to solve problems that are better addressed regionally than separately? These are all questions worth asking as we move into the 21st century.

Regional coordination is not easy. Yet it is essential for solving many of the complex issues that face us. It gives bonus benefits too, like saving money and more efficiently providing services. Just as in the "tale of two towns," regional coordination is not pain-free, but it shows that working together is better than working alone.

One of my jobs is to share the lessons all of us are learning together. In this publication, you will read about several communities that are working together to accomplish mutual goals as envisioned by the creators of the GMA. Please let me know about the growth management successes that are happening in your areas.

Event to recognize 10 years of GMA work

The Washington State Office of Community Development, along with other organizations, is sponsoring an event to recognize 10 years of work under the GMA.

The gathering will be November 9 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Woodland Park Zoo Rain Forest Pavilion in Seattle.

For details or to RSVP, please contact Julie Knackstedt at 360-725-3053 or juliek@cted.wa.gov.

Regional cooperation fosters solutions

By Mark Kulaas
Planning Director, Douglas County

Jurisdictions in Douglas County are cooperating on intergovernmental approaches to land use issues. Recent events:

■ In July the Douglas County Board of Commissioners adopted an airport overlay protection-zoning district as the concluding legislative enactment to protect the Pangborn Memorial Airport. The airport is the general aviation airport that serves Douglas and Chelan counties and the surrounding area. An airport board jointly operates the airport under an agreement between the Port of Douglas County and the Port of Chelan County. These three entities, Douglas County, and the Aviation Division of the Washington State Department of Transportation formed an advisory committee of citizens, airport users, and agency representatives to determine how best to protect the long-term viability of the airport.

The advisory committee met over the course of several months, supported by staff from the involved agencies. The advisory committee concluded that no major changes were necessary to the land use plan for the area, which already classifies much of the surrounding area as most appropriate for continuing agricultural uses. The committee determined that additional development regulations were appropriate and developed the recommended overlay zoning district to be applied particularly in the airport approach and turning areas. The district is modeled after state and federal aviation regulations and models.

■ Douglas County also has assigned most of the future sales and use tax receipts received under the rural counties program to support financing

of the installation of industrial sanitary sewer service to the Pangborn Industrial Service Area (PISA). This action was taken after agreement of the cities/towns in the county and the port district. Sanitary sewer service is the last remaining infrastructure component to support the development of PISA into a job creation center. Previously, Douglas County completed a \$3 million alternate transportation route serving PISA, including a new highway intersection; the East Wenatchee Water District upgraded water systems to provide fire flows; and the Douglas County Public Utility District has extended its fiber optic network to allow high speed, high capacity Internet access.

■ In June the board of commissioners approved an emergency ordinance allowing the state to create a temporary housing facility for cherry harvest workers. A most contentious and complex issue, the lack of adequate agricultural worker housing during cherry harvest can have disastrous and wide spread economic impacts. The Office of Community Development initiated an effort to establish a facility this spring. As late as May, about one month before harvest, a site had still not been secured for a trial tent camp. The Port of Douglas County stepped forward and offered the use of about 10 acres. Douglas County enacted the emergency ordinance and the state mobilized personnel and equipment that developed temporary housing for 250 individuals and family members in a few weeks time.

While the tent camp has been removed, it served as a point of reference for the on-going deliberations on agricultural worker housing. It also demonstrates how various units of government can initiate positive action.

Council calls for VISION 2020 award nominations

The Puget Sound Regional Council is seeking nominations for the annual VISION 2020 Awards, which recognize efforts that are making the Puget Sound region a better place to live.

Each year, the VISION 2020 Awards spotlight innovative public and private activities that manage growth, improve transportation, protect the natural environment, and help create great neighborhoods.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PSRC

Nomination materials are available on the council's website, psrc.org or by contacting Anne Avery at 206-587-4818 or aavery@psrc.org. Nominations will be accepted through December 31, 2000.

Seattle's newly renovated Union Station received a VISION 2020 Award from the Puget Sound Regional Council last March. It is an example of how to preserve and enhance a historic landmark building through a public/private partnership.



Governor creates Office of Community Development

Governor Gary Locke, through a Governor's Directive, has divided the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) into two offices – the Office of Community Development (OCD) and the Office of Trade and Economic Development (OTED).

Busse Nutley is the director of OCD, which houses the Growth Management Program. Martha Choe is director of OTED.

"OCD's mission is to build livable and sustainable communities," said Nutley. "It will continue to assist local governments and nonprofit agencies, through financial and technical assistance, to manage growth and development, create housing for low-income residents, educate preschool children, protect our heritage, and prevent domestic violence and substance abuse."

The two offices are functioning as two separate organizations. CTED will continue to exist as a legal entity of the state until the legislature enacts the proposed bill to split the agency completely into independent departments.

Cooperative efforts and coordination important in providing affordable housing

By Allan Johnson, Housing Planner 2
King County Housing and Community Development

Accommodating affordability, as well as growth, is a critical part of making growth management work. This is an increasingly difficult task in King County as well as statewide.

The median price of a single-family home rose 53.5 percent within the county between 1990 and 1998, according to a 1999 monitoring report conducted by King County's Office of Regional Policy and Planning. As a result, only about 8.5 percent of homes for sale in King County were affordable to first-time homebuyers earning 80 percent of median income in 1998. Since then, the situation has been exacerbated as home sales prices continue to rise at a rate in excess of inflation.

Rental housing has also been affected. As a result, very low-income households experience significant difficulty in finding affordable housing. The 1999 monitoring report revealed less than .1 percent of rental housing was affordable to those below 30 percent of median income.

The consequences of this crisis in affordable housing are apparent. "It is very difficult for our teachers and police officers to find housing," said King County Executive Ron Simms. "Service and retail workers making \$10 or \$12 an hour cannot afford an average price rental.

Having housing that our residents can afford is essential to keeping our economy strong."

In response to this challenge, King County, and its jurisdictions, have engaged in a number of approaches to create affordable housing (typically defined as housing that costs no more than about 30 percent of gross household income).

Our county-wide planning policies direct all jurisdictions to plan for at least 17 percent of their new housing to be affordable to people such as school teachers or office assistants earning between 50 percent and 80 percent of median income (about \$30,000 to \$45,000 per year for a three-person household during the year 2000).

In addition, these policies state that 20 to 24 percent of new housing (depending on the affordability of the existing housing stock) should be affordable to households earning less than 50 percent of the median income. These households typically include people such as shop clerks and bank tellers earning \$10 to \$12 per hour or less.

To help meet these goals, communities throughout the county have designated areas for apartment and condominium developments, as well as less traditional forms of housing – such as accessory dwelling units, cottage housing, and townhomes – in order to accommodate growth and affordability. Communities

have accommodated smaller-lot sizes and zero-lot line development in order to support single-family home affordability.

Most jurisdictions within the county have streamlined their permitting processes and development regulations to reduce financing and construction costs. In some communities, design standards have been added to development regulations in order to increase the acceptability of affordable and higher-density housing in

neighborhoods experiencing significant infill development.

Incentive programs – such as density bonuses, impact fee waivers, and the use of surplus government property for affordable housing development – have been utilized as an effective means of creating affordable units. King County has had significant success with these measures that currently create approximately 100 new, affordable units each year, within unincorporated King County, that are sold or rented at affordable rates.

The Sunrise Condominiums, located in unincorporated King County near Kent, are an example of a recently completed density bonus project. The developer, Colony Craft Inc., used King County's density bonus provisions to increase their permitted density from 64 units to 88. In exchange, the developer agreed to sell 25 units to households earning 80 percent or less than median income at an affordable rate.

In addition to regulatory measures, many jurisdictions dedicate funds – including Community Development Block Grant, Home Investment Partnerships Program, general fund, and levy funds (in the city of Seattle) – directly to affordable housing construction done by non-profits and for-profit providers. In 1998, more than \$19 million of these funds was used for affordable housing development within King County, supporting the creation or preservation of over 1,000 units.

Based on recent trends and projections, a variety of new techniques, along with existing measures, will be needed to meet the increasing challenges in providing affordable housing and ensuring the success of growth management in King County in the upcoming years.

New techniques – such as the programmatic environmental impact statements, mixed-use development, and transit-oriented development – are among the measures currently being explored by King County and its cities as possible additions to the arsenal of tools aimed at accommodating affordability.



The Renton Highland Apartments, an 18-unit housing development for homeless and formerly homeless families, was built by Catholic Community Services and the Archdiocesan Housing Authority with the assistance of \$375,000 from the King County Housing Opportunity Fund.

PHOTO / MARQUIS FRANK



Local governments beginning to make revenue sharing agreements

By Rita R. Robison
Editor, *About Growth*

Long before the GMA, local governments debated the financial implications of annexations. Many questions were raised. Where would new urban growth go and who would pay for supporting it? When cities annexed land, how could counties cope with losing tax revenues there? How could cities cover the costs of urban streets and urban development in formerly rural areas?

With the GMA, more certainty has been assured. Local governments are required to plan ahead where urban growth areas will be. Urban services are to be provided there and urban development must be allowed. Only in these planned areas can city annexations occur. Today, counties and cities are going one more step and beginning to negotiate revenue sharing agreements that make the transition of land from county to city easier to accomplish.

Some examples are offered below:

Grant County

The annexation of Wheeler Corridor, Grant County's primary industrial areas located near Moses Lake's city limits, was controversial. The corridor contains resource-based industries and other industries.

The county and the city of Moses Lake entered into negotiations on the boundary of the urban growth area (UGA) and the terms of a revenue sharing agreement.

The key parts of the revenue sharing agreement are:

- For any annexation (excluding resource based industries) in excess of \$20 million in assessed value, the fiscal impact will be phased in over six years. The city's payment will start at \$1.50 per \$1,000 in assessed value and be reduced by \$.25 each year until it reaches zero. The six-year ramp-down would correspond with the time frame of the county's capital improvement program and substantially assist the county in adjusting to reduced road fund revenues while maintaining planned levels of service.

- For each annexation of an existing resource based industry, the city will reimburse the county on a decreasing scale: starting at the current rate (\$2.23 per \$1,000) and decreasing \$.25 each year until \$1.125 is reached. This reimbursement will continue for the 20-year life of the agreement.

- For new resource-based industries developed after annexation, reimbursement will be at a rate of \$1.125 for a period of 10 years.

- The city and county will share the costs of maintenance for portions of two key roads for 10 years.

- The city will reimburse the county for the depreciated value of capital investments that are subsequently annexed.

Whatcom County

Whatcom County has entered into interlocal agreements with the cities of Bellingham, Lynden, Ferndale, Sumas, and Blaine regarding annexation and development approval within UGAs. The county is in the process of negotiating agreements with the cities of Nooksack and Everson.

The City of Bellingham's UGA contains industrial areas and commercial areas, some of which are developed. The county recognized it would have a significant decrease in tax revenue from annexation, said Greg Aucutt, senior planner for the City of Bellingham, and the city tried to be fair about negotiating an agreement.

The revenue sharing formula for these agreements is as follows:

City and county agree to share in the sales tax revenues for annexations of significant developed commercial and/or industrial land. In those cases, sales tax revenues will be computed and shared on the following basis:

To determine base value for the local sales tax revenue, base value equals total sales tax revenue from the 1 percent local sales tax collected in the 12 calendar months prior to the effective date of the annexation.

- First year county receives .80 of base value.

- Second year county receives .50 of base value.

- Third year county receives .20 of base value.

The county receives .15 directly from the state. The city will reimburse the difference (.65 of base value for the first year, .35 base value for the second year, and .05 of base value for the third year).

Walla Walla County

Walla Walla County and the City of Walla Walla have agreed to share revenues for annexation of significant developed commercial and industrial businesses that have been in operation for at least five years prior to the date of annexation.

As part of the agreement the city agreed to provide utility mains in the UGA, and the county committed that development will be permitted in the UGA only on city utilities, according to Bob Martin, planning director for City of Walla Walla.

The city will reimburse the county a percentage of the combined property tax and sales tax that transfers to the city upon annexation. The percentage is as follows:

- Year 1: 45 percent
- Year 2: 32 percent
- Year 3: 21 percent
- Year 4: 14 percent
- Year 5: 7 percent
- Year 6 and beyond: all property and sales tax retained by the city

Clark County

When the City of Vancouver proposed to annex the Vancouver Mall in 1993, Clark County had concerns about loss of sales tax revenue and that only the mall was to be annexed. The county and city negotiated an agreement that included adding 7,500 residences to the annexation and a revenue sharing agreement, said Ken Shorthill, budget manager for the city.

Under a five-year revenue sharing agreement, which ended in 1997, the city agreed to the following payments:

- Fixed payments. \$300,000 for 1993, \$200,000 for 1994, and \$100,000 for 1995.

Coordinated planning key to successful annexation

By Karyn Criswell
Long-Range Planning Services, City of Vancouver

The state's largest annexation went before the Clark County Boundary Review Board (BRB) on October 28, 1996 – the City of Vancouver proposed to annex over 25,000 people and 6,084 acres in Clark County. After two years of behind-the-scenes staff work and months of intensive neighborhood outreach, those working on the annexation were anxious to see the community's response.

As everyone waited for a barrage of denunciations, a total of eight citizens spoke at the hearing; only three opposed the annexation. In an almost anticlimactic manner, the BRB voted to double the size of the proposed annexation to 11,258 acres including 58,000 residents.

Annexation agreements

The genesis of the 1996 East County annexation began in 1993 with the annexation of the county's major shopping mall into the City of Vancouver. Until that time, annexation activity had been low key with many small annexations occurring on a piecemeal basis. While there was a commitment to create a more comprehensive approach to annexation, the city continued to pursue only those unincorporated areas that approached the 75 percent valuation of petitions required for annexation.

This piecemeal approach was the status quo until a large commercial area was targeted for annexation in 1995. At that time the city and county came to an agreement that annexation planning should be more comprehensive in nature. It was further agreed that if annexations were inevitable, it would be preferable to expend energies on major annexations rather than annexing a few acres at a time over several years. In addition, the transition of services could be done in a more efficient manner through a larger annexation.

In mid-1995, the county agreed to support the city's annexation efforts if the city would agree to annex the remaining east county urban areas. Property-owner petitions were approved by the council to include the balance of the city's water and sewer service area outside of the city limits, but within the Vancouver Urban Growth Area.

A significant step was taken by the city council and county commissioners with the formal adoption of an interlocal agreement in April 1996 that spelled out the key components of a successful annexation. Provisions of the agreement included the

At the same time the core group was working on internal issues, extensive communication and discussion with neighborhood, business, and civic association leaders occurred. Staff met over a period of months with neighborhood groups and with an advisory group of all affected neighborhoods, the Citizens Advisory Group (CAG). This group, at the request of the county and city, outlined the concerns, services, and service levels the residents thought they would need to support annexation. Involvement of the CAG created the understanding of the annexation that lead to only three residents speaking at the final public hearing in opposition to the annexation.

Annexation implementation

Upon annexation, an agreement for post-annexation service delivery went into effect. This agreement enabled the city to accomplish the large annexation with the help of the Board of County Commissioners and the Clark County Sheriff. Development of this comprehensive agreement occurred under the direction of a loaned executive from the county who worked directly for both the

city manager and the county administrator to coordinate this effort.

The transition agreement provided continued law enforcement, public works maintenance, and transportation services at existing levels for up to three years. It also accommodated the orderly transfer of staff from county to city. These agreements allowed existing service levels to be maintained while phasing-in permanent city service provisions.

City of Vancouver and Clark County leaders made personal commitments to a shared vision. Because of these commitments, more formal, institutional agreements about funding, roles, and structure became a reality. It was only after cooperation prevailed that the real work began for developing solutions to urban growth.

For more information about this annexation process, contact Karyn Criswell at 360-696-8069.



commitment to develop short-term service agreements, guiding language for employee transfers, joint financial planning, and the commitment to develop long-term service agreements to provide seamless urban services to the newly annexed area.

Comprehensive annexation planning

With strong leadership from the mayor and the chair of the board, city and county staff began to collaborate and meet with various neighborhood groups. A core group of six city and county staff members met regularly to discuss the issues and chart a proper course to bring the annexation to fruition. This group included the respective budget directors, finance directors, and assistants of the city manager and county administrator.

Skagit County subarea plan for Bayview Ridge Urban Growth Area: a coordinated regional approach

By Gary R. Christensen, AICP
Assistant Planning Director, Skagit County

When the Growth Management Act (GMA) was adopted in 1990, it became clear that land use planning and development would be guided by a new set of state goals, community values, and regulatory standards. Encouraging urban development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be

infrastructure inadequacies, adverse impacts to the environment, and the loss of a high quality of life enjoyed by all. It is this need for a regional collaborative approach that creates the greatest challenge for effective growth management planning.

Skagit County, the City of Burlington, and the Port of Skagit County have embarked on a mutually agreed to regional land use planning strategy for the Bayview Ridge Urban Growth Area. It is an independent, non-municipal urban growth

The criteria seek to mitigate impacts that are often encountered when land uses and associated development are in close proximity to airports. These airport study recommendations, the draft subarea plan, and the associated development regulations are evidence that mixed land uses and an airport can co-exist.

For more information about this intergovernmental planning process, contact Gary R. Christensen at 360-336-9410.

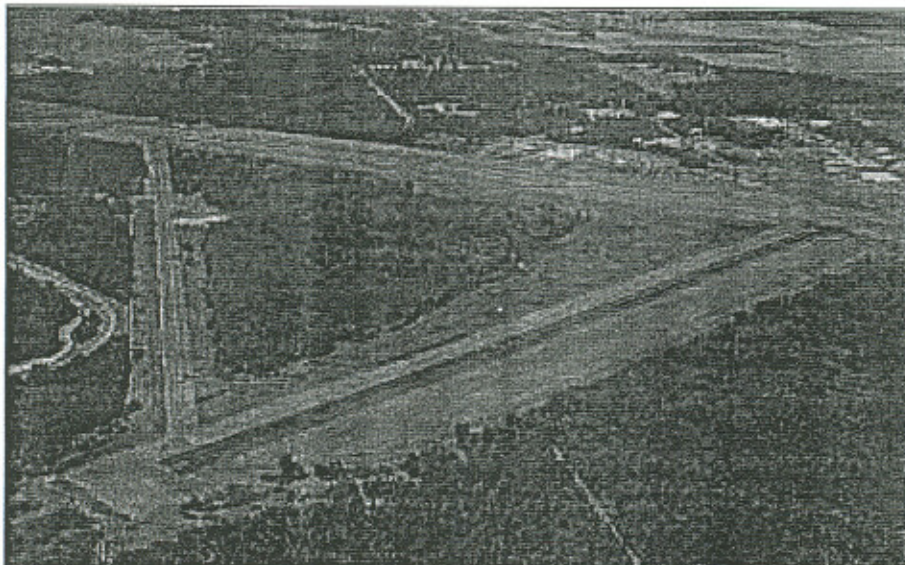


PHOTO COURTESY OF WSDOT

provided for and reducing sprawl are two principal planning goals of this legislation. Today, 10 years later, growth management is being implemented in Skagit County.

The Washington State Legislature in its passage of the GMA determined it was vital that communities cooperate and coordinate with one another in developing comprehensive land use plans. Intergovernmental cooperation among cities, counties, and special purpose districts is important, if communities are going to be successful in managing growth.

Urban growth areas are one of the techniques used to implement effective growth management. One of their chief strengths as a growth management tool is the requirement for regional cooperation, because it is the fragmented nature of land decision making that contributes most to sprawl, uncoordinated development,

area that is not contiguous to or affiliated with a city or town. This unique arrangement creates a need for regional cooperation among the various stakeholders.

Critical to the planning process was analyzing and assessing the impact of commercial, industrial, and residential land uses adjacent to the Skagit Regional Airport. The GMA discourages the siting of land uses that are incompatible with an airport.

Assuring long-term viability of the airport as a regional transportation facility (and essential public facility) and allowing for development on adjacent properties was of primary importance in the development of a long-range plan for the Bayview Ridge Urban Growth Area. Land use compatibility criteria that address airport environment's height, noise, and public safety issues are recommended.

Local agencies worked cooperatively to develop criteria to protect the Skagit Regional Airport.

Local governments beginning to make revenue sharing agreements

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

■ Sales tax 0.5 percent. A portion of the first 5/10th percent local sales tax revenue for five years, subject to certain limitations.

■ Law enforcement indexing. Variable payments, if necessary, to ensure that the county sheriff's staffing ratio in unincorporated areas could be maintained at one employee per 1,000 population.

■ Mutually determined programs. An amount not to exceed \$300,000 per year to programs mutually determined by the city and county, in accordance with the Vancouver Urban Growth Management Agreement.

The agreement allowed the county to make the following collections:

■ Sales tax 0.2 percent. Collection of 2/10th percent local sales tax revenue citywide in return for providing probation, district court, and emergency communications for the city for four years.

■ Sales tax 0.1 percent. Collection of 1/10th percent local sales tax revenue for five years in return for providing jail and custody services for the city for four years.

National conference to focus on urban design, safety

The conference, "Redefining Community: A Smart Growth Approach to Street and Neighborhood Design, Crime Prevention, and Public Health and Safety," will take place January 19-20 at the U.S. Grant Hotel in downtown San Diego.

The conference will focus on urban design for crime prevention and street design for pedestrian safety. These two overriding public safety and livability issues are critical to the revitalization of urban centers and older suburbs and the design of new neighborhood communities.

California's Local Government Commission and Pennsylvania State University are sponsoring the event. The state Office of Community Development is a cosponsor.

For details, call 916-448-1198 or visit the conference website at www.outreach.psu.edu/C&I/RedefiningCommunity.

County, cities cooperate on affordable housing

By Arthur Sullivan
Executive Director, ARCH

Where do you start to address local affordable housing needs? How can you find the resources needed to finance affordable housing? How do you actually implement and administer new programs?

Communities in East King County pondered these questions in the early 1990s. Experience was limited and resources more so. An idea emerged – form an interlocal agency called ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing) to allow jurisdictions to share expertise and resources. Formed in 1993, ARCH now includes 13 cities in East King County and the county.

One of ARCH's programs is the ARCH Housing Trust Fund. This fund has created or preserved more than 1,100 units of affordable housing in East King County using about \$8.5 million of local resources and leveraging more than \$50 million in county, state, federal, and private resources.

The trust fund is a cooperative effort:

- Funds made available by the county and cities are pooled together. The jurisdictions are willing to have their funds used for housing located in other communities. For example, five cities provided a total of \$900,000 to fund the preservation of a 59-unit, federally-subsidized Section 8 senior project located on Mercer Island. The local governments take

the perspective that over time expenditures will balance out.

- A stable, ongoing funding source has been created that is often not available outside larger cities. This steady funding helps local housing agencies increase their capacity. Three local agencies that had only voluntary board members now have paid staff.
- The ARCH model creates a system where cities learn from each other. This helps cities undertake new projects because they've seen similar ideas work in neighboring communities.



ARCH contributed \$900,000 to Ellsworth House, a \$5.4 million, 59-unit housing project for low-income seniors on Mercer Island.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. ANDREW'S HOUSING GROUP

The trust fund is one example of how ARCH works to benefit member jurisdictions in their efforts. ARCH also assists cities in other ways, such as developing land use regulations (e.g., accessory dwelling units) and mutually administering local programs.

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